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UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

Working paper prepared by the Secretariat

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UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS 1/

I. GENERAL

1. The United States Virgin Islands is situated 75 kilometres east of Puerto Rico and comprises about 50 islands and islets, the largest of which are St. Croix (218 square kilometres), St. Thomas (73 square kilometres) and St. John (52 square kilometres). The capital of the Territory, Charlotte Amalie, is located on St. Thomas.

2. According to the latest census, taken in the United States Virgin Islands in 1990, the population of the Territory was 101,809 (St. Croix, 50,139; St. Thomas, 48,166; and St. John, 3,504). Females outnumbered males 52,599 to 49,210.

3. The climate of the Territory is subtropical and is moderated by the trade winds. The Territory has an average annual rainfall of 114 centimetres (45 inches) and lies within the hurricane zone. In September 1989, Hurricane Hugo struck the Territory and caused extensive damage, estimated at over US$ 1 billion, 2/ to the Territory's infrastructure and its residential, commercial and tourist facilities (for details see A/AC.109/1029).

4. In his state of the Territory address on 24 January 1994, the Governor stated that, following Hurricane Hugo, the United States Virgin Islands had developed modern emergency management facilities to direct the Territory in times of natural disaster.

II. CONSTITUTIONAL AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

A. Constitutional developments

5. The Revised Organic Act of the Virgin Islands, 1954, as amended, 1968-1972, remains the Constitution of the Territory. The Government consists of three distinct branches: executive, legislative and judicial. The Governor, who is the chief executive, and the Lieutenant-Governor are elected jointly for a four-year term.

6. The Governor is responsible for administering all activities of the executive branch, including the appointment and removal of all staff, and executing federal and local laws, including the application in the United States Virgin Islands of those provisions of the Constitution of the United States of America that are not inconsistent with the islands' status as an unincorporated Territory of the United States. The Governor may recommend bills to the Legislature and veto any legislation, as provided in the Revised Organic Act.

7. The United States Secretary of the Interior has the power to appoint a federal comptroller for the Territory (who may not be a member of any executive department of the territorial Government) whose functions include improving the efficiency and economy of government programmes and auditing and supervising the

use of federal funds. Since early 1983, the role of federal comptroller has been assumed by the Inspector-General, United States Department of the Interior.

8. In order to be eligible to register as a voter, a person must be a citizen of the United States, must be 18 years of age or older and must have been a resident of the Territory for 90 days. The Legislature is empowered to prescribe other qualifications provided that no property, language or income qualifications may be imposed and that no discrimination may be made on the grounds of race, sex or religious belief. The Absentee Voter's Bill, which was signed into law on 28 July 1972, provides for absentee voting procedures.

9. Since 1973, the Territory has sent a non-voting delegate to the United States House of Representatives. The delegate, whose term is for two years, is elected by majority vote.

B. Political parties and elections

10. There are three political parties in the Territory: the Democratic Party of the Virgin Islands (DPVI), which is the largest; the Independent Citizens Movement (ICM); and the Progressive Republican Party of the Virgin Islands (PRPVI).

11. General elections are held in the Territory every two years for the 15 seats in the Senate of the Virgin Islands, for the Territory's delegate to the United States Congress and to the territorial Board of Education and Board of Elections. Elections for the office of Governor and Lieutenant-Governor are held every four years. The position of Governor is limited to two consecutive terms. Gubernatorial elections were last held in November 1990.

12. The last elections for the 15 elected seats in the Virgin Islands Senate were held on 3 November 1992 and were contested by 41 candidates comprising 14 independents and 27 members of the three political parties (14 from DPVI, 7 from PRPVI and 6 from ICM). Out of a total of 40,887 registered voters, 26,770, or 65.5 per cent, voted in the above elections. The final results were as follows: DPVI won 7 seats; PRPVI, 4 seats; independents, 3 seats; and ICM, 1 seat. Nine incumbents were defeated in the elections. A DPVI-led coalition of 10 members, formed after the elections, is the majority bloc in the Twentieth Legislature. 3/

13. Mr. Ron de Lugo, a Democrat, defeated his opponent by a 21 per cent lead to be re-elected as the Territory's delegate to the United States Congress for a tenth term; he served in that capacity until his retirement in January 1994.

14. The next general elections in the Territory are scheduled to be held in 1994.

C. Future status of the Territory

15. On 25 January 1993, Governor Alexander Farrelly proclaimed 1993 "The Year of Status" in the Territory. The Governor pledged to provide full support for

the public education programme of the Commission on Status and Federal Relations, which had been established in 1988, and would conduct a referendum on federal relations and future political status in September 1993. The Governor stated that he intended to propose legislation to create a mechanism to begin immediate consultations between the Territory and the Government of the United States to implement any changes in their relationship that would result from the referendum. 4/ During the first phase of the referendum, voters would choose between three options: (a) continued or enhanced territorial status; (b) complete integration with the United States; and (c) removal of United States sovereignty. A further referendum would be held to decide on one of seven political options within the following categories: (a) statehood and incorporated status; (b) compact of federal relations or commonwealth and status quo; and (c) free association and independence.

16. During the period under review, the first phase of the referendum was completed. According to press reports, on 11 October 1993, 10,710 persons, comprising 31.4 per cent of the eligible voters in the Territory, participated in the referendum. Published results were as follows: 80.3 per cent voted in favour of "continued or enhanced territorial status"; 14.2 per cent voted for "complete integration with the United States"; and 4.8 per cent favoured "removal of United States sovereignty". 5/

Position of the territorial Government

17. In his state of the Territory address on 24 January 1994, the Governor stated that "warm and cordial relations" had been established between the United States Virgin Islands and the United States federal Government and that the Territory and the administering Power "had been able to establish strong bonds in the atmosphere of mutual respect".

Action by the General Assembly

18. On 10 December 1993, the General Assembly adopted resolution 48/51, a consolidated resolution on 10 Territories, including the United States Virgin Islands.

19. In part B, section X of the resolution, the General Assembly noted the consultative character of the referendum which was held in the United States Virgin Islands on 11 October 1993 and the concerns raised in the Territory prior to the referendum about the questions of residency requirements and the availability of information on that political process. The Assembly requested the administering Power to assist the territorial Government in its efforts to attract light manufacturing and other enterprises to the Territory in order to diversify its economy. It invited the administering Power, as a matter of urgency, to facilitate the transfer of Water Island to the territorial Government; reiterated its request to the administering Power to facilitate as appropriate the participation of the Territory in the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), as well as in various international and regional organizations, including the Caribbean Group for Cooperation in Economic Development of the World Bank, in accordance with the policy of the administering Power and the terms of reference of such organizations; and called upon the administering Power to respond favourably to

the request of the territorial Government to dispatch a United Nations visiting and observer mission to the Territory.

D. Public service

20. The public service continued to be the largest single employer in the Territory. In December 1992, out of a total of 44,490 employed persons, government employees numbered 13,800 (770 federal and 13,030 territorial). Compared with the previous year, the number of federal employees remained the same, while territorial employees increased by 170.

21. In his state of the Territory address on 24 January 1994, the Governor reviewed the relations of the Government with the labour unions representing public employees. He acknowledged the fact that owing to the fiscal deficit of the territorial Government, $64 million in retroactive salary increases had been withheld during 1992-1993. He noted that, during 1993, the Government and the unions had concluded negotiations on 6 agreements. Another 5 were under negotiation and 15 were pending. The Governor pointed out that the Division of Personnel of the Department of Public Service had completed a comprehensive review and evaluation of the United States Virgin Islands public service.

E. External relations

22. The United States Virgin Islands is an associate member of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and its subsidiary bodies, including the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC). In December 1992, at its fourteenth ministerial session, CDCC adopted the report of its Working Group on Non-Independent Caribbean Countries which was presented by the representative of the United States Virgin Islands who was Chairman of the Working Group. 6/ At the session, CDCC adopted resolution 37 (XIV) entitled "Support for Non-Independent Caribbean Countries' Access to the United Nations system", by which CDCC called on the Chairman of CDCC, in consultation with the Chairman of the Working Group, to initiate contacts with the Chairman of the Special Committee with the aim of seeking formal collaboration between the two bodies in furtherance of the ongoing study by the Working Group on the access of non-independent Caribbean countries to the United Nations system. The Chairman of the Special Committee attended the ministerial session of CDCC and made a statement. He was accompanied by the representative of the Congo. The Territory continued to cooperate with other Caribbean and Pacific countries and to participate in conferences and programmes organized by Governments, international organizations and multilateral agencies.

F. Other developments

23. During the period under review, discussions continued between the territorial Government and the Government of the United States over the transfer of Water Island (the fourth largest island) to the territorial Government upon expiration of the lease to private developers in December 1992 (see also A/AC.109/1109, paras. 39-41).

24. In his state of the Territory address in January 1994, the Governor stated that the United States Virgin Islands "will continue to push for the resolution of the transfer of Water Island to the territorial jurisdiction".

III. MILITARY INSTALLATIONS

25. The United States Navy currently maintains a radar and sonar calibration station and a headquarters building for its underwater tracking facility. There are permanent recruitment centres for the armed forces and a detachment of the United States Coast Guard on St. Thomas. The Virgin Islands National Guard is affiliated with the United States Army. The Territory remained a port of call for United States naval vessels and those of its allies. (For recent developments, see the working paper on military activities and arrangements in the United States Virgin Islands (A/AC.109/1187).)

IV. ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

A. General

26. The economy of the Territory is based on tourism and related services, construction and industrial development. The largest oil refinery in the western hemisphere, with a capacity of 700,000 barrels a day, is located in the Territory. The Territory is also a centre for international business and, since 1985, has been the location of over 80 per cent of the United States foreign sales corporations. The development of agriculture continued to be a priority of the Government's overall policy of diversification. In 1989, the latest year for which data is available, the gross territorial product was estimated at $1.3 billion and the per capita personal income was $11,052.

B. Public finance

27. According to press reports, on 3 September 1993 the Governor presented to the Legislative Assembly the budget for the 1994 fiscal year. The revenue was estimated at $385 million against proposed expenditures of $430.5 million ($380 million and $426 million, respectively, in fiscal year 1993). 7/

28. In his state of the Territory address in January 1994, the Governor emphasized that during 1993 the fiscal problems of the territorial Government had been most severe and that the budget deficit at the end of 1993 fiscal year had stood at $27 million. In addition, it was expected that the budget deficit in fiscal year 1994 would be similar to the indicator of 1993.

29. In addressing the rising budget deficit, the territorial Government established a deficit reduction task force which was to work out a plan of action to reduce wasteful spending, introduce improved revenue collection and enhance fiscal management. A report of the task force should be submitted to the Governor in 1994.

30. The Governor also recommended the implementation of the following measures: (a) curbing abuses of sick-leave and overtime by certain departments and agencies; (b) cutting back on excessive administrative personnel; (c) reducing operating costs of some governmental agencies; and (d) streamlining basic personnel and procurement policies. He also recommended an increase of revenue by raising the gross receipt tax from 4 per cent to 4.7 per cent, introducing a new 2 per cent payroll tax and increasing bank fees from $100,000 to $500,000.

31. According to the Governor, during the period under review, the Government completed an exercise aimed at reconciling all government bank accounts for 1986-1992 as well as finalizing comprehensive financial reports for fiscal years 1988 and 1989. It is expected that in 1994, comprehensive financial reports for the period 1990-1993 would be ready and that an audit would be conducted on financial reports for 1993.

C. Agriculture, livestock and fisheries

32. The policy of the territorial Government continued to be aimed at rebuilding the agricultural infrastructure by providing suitable land for the production of food and cattle and by offering suitable incentives to farmers and fishermen (see A/AC.109/1109, paras. 54-58).

33. In May 1993, in their testimony before the Territorial Senate Economic Development and Agricultural Development Committee, several farmers from St. Thomas stated that farming continued to flounder on St. Thomas and urged the Government to take action to bolster agriculture. They particularly referred to the lack of arable land and water needed for agriculture. 8/

D. Industrial development

34. The industrial sector, which is based primarily on St. Croix, consists of heavy manufacturing industries such as oil refinery and aluminium production, as well as light industrial enterprises, which include watch-assembly companies, pharmaceutical, garment and electronic industries, all of which benefit from duty-free entry into the United States. The Territory also exports a significant quantity of rum to the United States. The territorial Government provides several tax and other incentives in order to encourage new industries to locate there (see also A/AC.109/1109, paras. 59-63).

35. According to the territorial Government, the value of exports of refined petroleum to the United States declined by 16.4 per cent from $2.3 billion in 1990 to $1.96 billion in 1991. The value of exports of aluminium declined by approximately 50 per cent from $30.6 million in 1990 to $15.3 million in 1991. During the same period, the quantity of rum exports to the United States declined by 8.5 per cent from 9.8 million litres to 9 million litres. The amount of rum excise taxes returned to the Territory, however, increased from $29.2 million in 1990 to $31.5 million in 1991. The latest figure on the volume of watches exported from the Territory was 3.18 million pieces in 1988. 9/

E. International business

36. The Lieutenant-Governor continued to be responsible for the regulation and supervision of domestic and international banks, insurance and other companies. United States federal authorities also supervise United States banks and companies operating in the Territory.

37. In his state of the Territory address in January 1994, the Governor stated that, during 1993, the territorial Government had processed 17,401 licences for banks and other companies. Fee collection had increased by $776,184 (or 25 per cent), compared with 1987. He reiterated his commitment to creating a favourable business climate in the United States Virgin Islands.

38. According to the administering Power, the insurance rates in the Territory are among the highest within the United States and its dependent Territories. Further, as a result of Hurricane Hugo, premiums for commercial property increased from 0.55 per cent of total property value to between 1.6 and 1.8 per cent of total property value. Residential rates increased from 0.35 per cent to 1.2 per cent.

39. The report of the administering Power also indicates that a cumbersome process of obtaining business permits continues to be a disincentive for investment in the United States Virgin Islands. Another major factor discouraging foreign investment is the perception of the Territory as a high-crime area.

40. In his state of the Territory address in January 1994, the Governor stated that, in 1993, the Government of the United States Virgin Islands purchased the assets of the West Indian Company, a wholly owned subsidiary of the East Asiatic Company of Denmark, which had significant property and development interests in the Charlotte Amalie Harbor.

F. Tourism and related services

41. According to the administering Power, tourism has recovered from the setbacks created by the devastation caused by Hurricane Hugo in 1989. The number of visitors in 1991 totalled 1,942,700, compared with 1,917,800 in 1987. Total tourism-related expenditure amounted to $708 million in 1991; that same year, tourism-related employment totalled 8,090, a decline of 3.3 per cent from the previous year. The industry continued to be a major employer in the Territory, however, accounting for 19 per cent of its total employment.

42. The administering Power also indicates that approximately two thirds of the tourists are day visitors from cruise ships. The number of those visitors increased by 8.5 per cent in 1991, compared with 1990. Air arrivals in 1991 totalled 682,400, compared with 695,400 in 1990. That decline is attributed to the effects of the economic recession in the United States, since over 80 per cent of the United States Virgin Islands hotel guests originate from the mainland United States.

43. In his 1994 state of the Territory address, the Governor noted with satisfaction that during the period between October 1992 and October 1993, a record high of 731,000 air arrivals were registered, an increase of 11 per cent over the previous fiscal year. The hotel room occupancy for the same period increased by 52.4 per cent on St. Croix, by 21.7 per cent on St. Thomas and by 21.7 per cent on St. John. Cruise ship arrivals registered a 5 per cent decline during the 1993 fiscal year, compared with the previous year. The Governor attributed that decline to a number of the cruise ships shifting from the Caribbean to Alaska and the Mediterranean.

G. Communications and basic facilities

Roads

44. According to the administering Power, the Territory of the United States Virgin Islands has an extensive road network. The federally aided system which covers the primary system is 431 kilometres in length. In addition, there are local roads that make up the secondary network. Private (subdivision) roads are being turned over to the Government and are to be maintained by the Department of Public Works. The Department, however, is reluctant to incorporate those roads which are generally of substandard quality since they would require major and costly maintenance work. The Territory has embarked on a construction programme for road improvements financed by the Federal Highway Trust Fund. The Fund has earmarked $87.5 million for the project for the period 1993-1998.

Ports

45. The United States Virgin Islands Port Authority (VIPA) operates and maintains a number of ports on St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix. On St. Thomas, the principal facility is Crown Bay which has three berths for cruise ships, two for container ships and small cargo ships, and a marina for 100 boats. The public wharf at Charlotte Amalie serves small passenger boats travelling between the United States Virgin Islands and nearby destinations in the Caribbean such as the British Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. Charlotte Amalie also has cruise ship facilities. Crown Bay has a container dock and roll-on/roll-off facilities. Cruz Bay on St. John has both passenger and cargo facilities. Implementation of plans to expand the ports at St. Thomas and St. John and to relocate some of their facilities will depend on the securing of the necessary permits and funds for the project.

Airports

46. There are two airports in the Territory, the Cyril E. King Airport on St. Thomas and the Alexander Hamilton Airport on St. Croix. According to the administering Power, the airport facilities on St. Thomas are being expanded - a new terminal has been completed and a 2,195-metre runway with a parallel 2,134-metre taxiway, as well as a cargo terminal, are under construction. The airport on St. Croix had been severely damaged by Hurricane Hugo. Many buildings had been destroyed. The airport terminal, however, while sustaining considerable damage, had retained its structural integrity. Since the

hurricane, extensive repairs have been made to the terminal and to air traffic control systems.

Water supplies

47. Water requires critical attention in the United States Virgin Islands principally because the three main islands rely on a saltwater conversion process for most of their potable water supply. Production costs are significant and water conservation is of paramount importance.

48. St. Thomas has a water demand of approximately 13.6 to 15.9 million litres per day. The desalination facility on the island, which utilizes waste heat from the electric power station, produces 13.6 million litres per day of potable water. This source is supplemented by a limited amount of rain water. According to the administering Power, a water production expansion project, which should increase water desalination capacity by 6.4 million litres per day, is near completion.

49. On St. Croix where demand for water is between 11.4 and 12.5 million litres per day, the main sources of potable water are groundwater and desalination by distillation, with a production of 4.5 and 9.1 million litres per day, respectively.

50. On St. John, a reverse osmosis project, which provides the island with 0.7 million litres per day of potable water, has been completed recently. This eliminates the need to import, by barge, 50 per cent of the island's demand in potable water from St. Thomas.

Sewerage system

51. According to the administering Power, all three islands have waste-water treatment plants and sewage collection systems. In addition, a number of dwellings have individual waste-water disposal systems which are not connected to the main system. All waste-water treatment plants discharge effluent to either an inland stream or the ocean. The towns of Charlotte Amalie on St. Thomas and Christiansted on St. Croix, which have limited quantities of potable water, use saltwater to rinse their sewerage systems.

Solid waste disposal

52. Information provided by the administering Power indicates that solid waste handling and disposal in the United States Virgin Islands are very efficiently managed under the direction of the Department of Public Works. Collection, landfill operations, recycling and litter control are of a reasonably high standard. The handling of solid waste is a seven-day-a-week operation principally because of the method of roadside collection from bins.

Power generation and distribution

53. The territorial Water and Power Authority, commonly referred to as WAPA, is an autonomous utility agency serving a total of approximately 45,000 customers on St. Thomas, St. John, Water Island, Hassel Island and the island of

St. Croix. The system is managed by WAPA headquarters on St. Thomas. Major generating facilities are located on St. Thomas and St. Croix, with a stand-by facility on the island of St. John.

H. Foreign trade

54. The Territory's foreign trade continued to be dominated by petroleum products and by alumina since resumption of its production in 1990. The United States continued to be the Territory's main trading partner. Venezuela is the source of bauxite ore which is used in the production of alumina.

I. Public works

55. In his state of the Territory address in January 1994, the Governor indicated that, in 1993, the funding obligations of the Department of Public Works reached $19 million. During the year, the Department had initiated a $35 million programme of road construction and other transportation-related projects throughout the Territory. The Governor also reported that a minimum of $17 million will be allocated for critical mitigation projects to alleviate damages caused by natural disasters.

V. SOCIAL CONDITIONS

A. Labour

56. According to the Governor, as of September 1993, the employed labour force in the United States Virgin Islands was 48,010 (43,600 in 1987) and the unemployment rate was 3.8 per cent (6.2 in 1987). The average annual salary in the private sector was $20,155; in the public sector it was $26,253 ($13,843 and $15,330, respectively, in 1987). In 1993, the unemployment insurance reserve fund stood at $51.8 million, compared with $8.1 million in 1987.

57. According to the administering Power, the limited population of the United States Virgin Islands makes it difficult for the Territory's educational system to provide the various professional skills necessary to meet the demands of the economy. Critical skills can be imported, but the lack of a qualified labour force often impedes sustained growth.

B. Public health

58. The Virgin Islands Department of Health continued to be responsible for the provision and management of health-care services for the Territory's residents and visitors. Although some services are provided by the private sector, the majority of services are provided by, through, or under the direction of the Department. The relatively high poverty level contributes to a lower health status of the population.

59. The geography of the Territory requires that each island have a self-contained health system. Similarly the geography of each island requires that primary care services be decentralized in order to get the services to residents within a reasonable time. The demography of the Territory represents a wide diversity. The immigration of families and individuals has resulted in an influx of illnesses not found in the United States. The emigration of young adults has resulted in the Territory's high proportion of children and older adults, two groups which are the greatest users of health care.

60. There are two hospitals in the Territory, the St. Thomas Hospital and the St. Croix Hospital, both of which were completed in 1982. Both hospitals are medical centres, each with a 250-bed capacity. The St. Croix Hospital was heavily damaged by Hurricane Hugo.

61. According to the Governor, during 1993, the territorial Government improved the financial management of its health care operations and its Medicaid and Medicare systems and continued its efforts at rebuilding the hospitals after the devastation inflicted by Hurricane Hugo.

62. On 13 October 1993, the territorial Government enacted legislation authorizing the Public Finance Authority to sell $15 million in general obligation revenue bonds for the acquisition of equipment and supplies for capital improvements to health care facilities throughout the islands. 10/

63. According to press reports, the United States Virgin Islands, along with all other United States Territories, will participate in the health care reform plan of President William Clinton. It is expected that the implementation of that plan will be of crucial importance to the system of public health in the Territory. 11/

64. It is reported that acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) has become a major problem in the Territory. According to statistical data for November 1993, 150 persons were afflicted with AIDS; 800 persons tested positive for human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and almost 8,000 persons were believed to have AIDS or to be HIV-positive without knowing it. 12/

65. Tuberculosis is also reported to have become a major public health problem in the United States Virgin Islands. Owing to the lack of necessary equipment for the diagnosis and treatment of that disease, the establishment of a specialized tuberculosis clinic in the Territory is considered to be an urgent necessity. 13/

C. Crime and crime prevention

66. In his state of the Territory address, the Governor said that violent acts had escalated and had become too frequent in the Territory. To reduce crime, the territorial Government had taken the following measures: creation of a firearms amnesty programme as a means of removing illegal and unregistered firearms from the community; introduction of illegal-weapons-search operations throughout the Territory; organization of an inter-agency approach to drug interdiction and illegal importation of firearms in the Territory involving both

the federal and local law enforcement agencies; involvement of the United States Virgin Islands National Guard in training for policing activities; expansion of crime prevention and crime watch programmes with emphasis on community policing programmes; utilization of peace officers to protect tourists during the Territory's peak tourist season; setting up of new training programmes for the police force; establishment of a territorial crime laboratory for the timely processing of criminal evidence; and expansion of the jurisdiction of the territorial Court of Law. Another major component of the territorial Government's policy on crime reduction is the creation of inter-agency programmes for troubled children, youths and their families.

67. According to the administering Power, the correctional facilities on both St. Croix and St. Thomas are seriously overcrowded. In his state of the Territory address, the Governor emphasized significant accomplishments achieved by the Bureau of Corrections during 1993 which had resulted in substantial improvements to the Golden Grove prison on St. Croix. According to press reports, 14/ in July 1993, the Territory received a federal grant of $5 million for the upgrading of that correctional facility.

68. Press reports indicate that in October 1993, a group of prisoners at the St. Thomas correctional facility filed a $55 million class action lawsuit against the United States Virgin Islands Government, alleging violation of their constitutional and civil rights. The group referred to conditions in the facility as inhuman, citing such facts as overcrowding, rat infestation, sharing cells with mentally ill inmates, inadequate medical treatment and exposure to inmates with tuberculosis and AIDS. 15/

VI. EDUCATIONAL CONDITIONS

69. Education in the Territory is free and compulsory for children up to the age of 16 years. The Department of Education administers 44 schools: 25 on St. Thomas, 16 on St. Croix and 3 on St. John. According to the administering Power, the damage to schools caused by Hurricane Hugo is almost completely repaired.

70. In his state of the Territory address, the Governor reiterated that education continued to be his priority. The Department of Education was currently operating under a comprehensive strategic plan. A comprehensive testing programme for students and a comprehensive school health programme had been introduced in the Territory in 1993. Following repairs to damage caused by Hurricane Hugo, the present condition of the public school infrastructure was the best in decades.

71. Post-secondary education is provided by the University of the Virgin Islands. The University provides programmes in agriculture, teacher education, business and resource management.

Notes

1/ The information contained in the present paper has been derived from published reports and from information transmitted to the Secretary-General by the Government of the United States of America under Article 73 e of the Charter of the United Nations on 12 July 1993.

2/ The local currency is the United States dollar (US$).

3/ The Daily News (United States Virgin Islands), 3, 4, 17 and 26 November 1992.

4/ Ibid., 26 January 1993.

5/ Ibid., 12 October 1993.

6/ United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, report of the meeting of the Working Group on Non-Independent Caribbean Countries, document LC/CAR/G.386.

7/ The Daily News (United States Virgin Islands), 1 October 1993.

8/ Ibid., 6 May 1993.

9/ United States Virgin Islands, Bureau of Economic Research, Department of Economic Development and Agriculture.

10/ United States Virgin Islands, Office of Public Relations, Official News Release No. 909, 14 October 1993.

11/ The Daily News (United States Virgin Islands), 23 September 1993.

12/ Ibid., 7 September 1993 and 21 November 1993.

13/ Ibid., 23 September 1993.

14/ Ibid., 29 July 1993.

15/ Ibid., 6 October 1993.